

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MONTRE 01525 151300Z

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL MONTREAL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8110

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMCONSUL QUEBEC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, CA

SUBJECT: QUEBEC ELECTION SPECULATIONS

1. CLAUDE PROVOST, DEPUTY MAYOR OF MONTREAL, DISCUSSED PROBABLE
UPCOMING PROVINCIAL ELECTION WITH CG YESTERDAY IN TERMS OF "HOW
BOURASSA ORGANIZES FOR IT; THAT IS, WHETHER HE AIMS FOR ANOTHER
MASSIVE WIN, OR FOR RETURN OF ABOUT SEVENTY-SEVENTY-FIVE SEATS,
OR FOR SIMPLE MAJORITY. LATTER WOULD BE DANGEROUS AS WOULD ANOTHER
OVERWHELMING MAJORITY. I THINK HE PROBABLY WANTS ONLY ABOUT SEVENTY.
I WAS ASKED TO RUN IN QUEBEC BUT POINTED OUT THAT I COULDN'T AS I WORK

FOR THE MAYOR." WHEN ASKED HOW HE THINKS THE REMAINING FORTY SEATS
WOULD BE DISTRIBUTED, HIS GUESS WAS ABOUT FIFTEEN FOR THE UNION
NATIONALE (UN) AND ALL, OR ALMOST ALL, OTHERS TO THE PARTI
QUEBECOIS. HE DOUBTED MUCH, IF ANY, SUCCESS FOR THE SOCIAL CREDITISTES

OR THE PARTI NATIONAL POPULAIRE. HE EMPHASIZED NEED TO HAVE UN
"BECOME THE OPPOSITION" THOUGH HE DID NOT PROJECT
THAT MANY SEATS FOR THEM. MAJOR THRUST, HOWEVER, WAS
THAT PROBABLE DISTRIBUTION IS IN BOURASSA'S HANDS; I.E., HOW MANY
SEATS LIBERALS WILL GO ALL OUT FOR.

2. POLITICALLY-AWARE FRANCOPHONE BUSINESSMEN WHO HAVE DISCUSSED
MATTER WITH CG RECENTLY HAVE DIFFERED ON EXTENT TO WHICH THEIR
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PAGE 02 MONTRE 01525 151300Z

GROUP WILL REGISTER PROTEST VOTES BY MOVING TO UN, SOME SAYING

"QUITE A FEW" AND OTHERS "NOT MANY." THEY ALL AGREE, HOWEVER, THAT JEROME CHOQUETTE WILL BE BEATEN IF HE RUNS AGAIN IN OUTREMONT. "THAT RIDING IS SO LIBERAL THAT LITERALLY ANYONE RUNNING UNDER THAT BANNER WILL WIM, THEY ALL VOTE THE PARTY, NOT THE CANDIDATE." EARLIER RUMORS SUGGESTED THAT PREMIER BOURASSA WAS PLANNING TO RUN AGAINST CHOQUETTE IN OUTREMONT, IN WHICH THEY BOTH LIVE. PM MAY YET ANNOUNCE FOR THAT RIDING, AS HE MAY WELL HAVE TROUBLE IN HIS OWN (MERCIER), BUT THERE IS LIKELIHOOD CHOQUETTE WILL ALSO CHOOSE ANOTHER RIDING TO CONTEST.

3. VIEWS ALSO DIFFER ON EXTENT TO WHICH DISENCHANTED ANGLOPHONE LIBERALS WILL SWITCH TO UN, BUT BOTH ENGLISH AND FRENCH MONTREALERS BELIEVE PARTY WILL BE MUCH STRONGER BY SPRING AND THUS A GOOD REASON FROM LIBERAL STANDPOINT FOR ELECTION THIS FALL.
HARPER

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